

Mary Leapor, "The Power of Beauty"

Description

MARY LEAPOR

•The Power of Beauty•

O Goddess of eternal Smiles,
Bright *Cythera* the fair,
Who taught *Sabina*'s pleasing Wiles,
By which she won *Bellair*.

Bellair, the witty and the vain,
Who laugh'd at Beauty's Pow'r;
But now the conquer'd humble Swain
Adores a painted Flow'r.

With *Delia*'s Art my Song inspire,
Whose Lips of rosy Hue
Can ne'er the partial Audience tire,
Tho' wiser *Claudia* do.

Tho' *Claudia*'s Wit and Sense refin'd,
Flows easy from her Tongue;
Her Soul but coarsely is enshrin'd,
So *Claudia* in the wrong.

Hark, *Delia* speaks that blooming Fair,
See Crowds are gathering round
With open Mouths: and wildly stare
To catch the empty Sound.

See *Lelia* with a Judgement clear,
With manly Wisdom blest;
Wit, Learning, Prudence, all appear
In that unruffled Breast.

But yet no Beau for *Lelia* dies,
No Sonnets pave her way;
Say, Muse, from whence these Evils rise,
Why *Lelia*'s Teeth decay.

Then, why do rev'rend Sages rail
At Woman's wanton Pride?

If Wisdom, Wit, and Prudence fail,
Let meaner Arts be tryâ€™d.

Those Arts to please are only meant;
But with an angry Frown,

The Queen of Wisdom lately sent
This Proclamation down: 35

Minerva, with the azure Eyes,
And thus the Statute runs,

If you wouâ€™d have your Daughters wise,
Take care to mend your Sons. 40

NOTES:

2 *Cythera* Venus, the goddess of love (*OED*).

3 *Sabina*â€™s This and subsequent names at lines 9, 12, and 21 were common womenâ€™s names in pastoral poetry.

7 *Swain* A shepherd in pastoral poetry.

29 *Sages* Men of â€œprofound wisdomâ€•(*OED*).

30 *wanton* â€œRecklessâ€•(*OED*).

35 *Queen of Wisdom* *Minerva*, the goddess of wisdom (*OED*).

Source: *Poems upon Several Occasions* (London, 1748), pp. 229-231. [Google Books]

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